cling with the door," rouse up and lend a

Thus abjured, the stranger crept along the wall toward Jeff and began again, "We have met with an accident," But here another and mightier gust left him speechless, covered with spray of a widely disorganized waterspout that, dangling from the roof, seemed to be playing on the front door, drove him into black ob-scurity and again sandwiched his host between the door and the wall. Then there was a luit, and in the midst of it Yuba Bill, driver of the Pioneer" coach, quietly and coolly, impervious in waterproof, walked into the hall, encred the barroom, took a candle, and, going behind the bar, selected a bottle, critically examined it, and returning poured out a quantity of whiskey in a glass and gulped it in a single draught. All this while Jeff was closing the door, and the meek-looking man was com-

ing into the light again.
Yuba Bill squared his elbows behind him and rested them on the bar, crossed his legs easily. and awaited them. In reply to Jeff's inquiring but respectful look, he said shortly: 'Oh, you're thar, are ye?"

Yes, Bill."

ten feet deep in the hollow with back water from the North Fork! I've taken that yar coach inter fower feet of it, and then I reckened I couldn't new more. 'I'll stand on this yer hand,' sez I: I brought the horses up yer and landed on in your barn to eat their blessed heads off till the water goes down. That's wot's the matter, old man, and jist about wot I kalkilated on from those durned old improvements o'

Coloring a little at this new count in the general indictment against the uselessness of the 'Half-way House," Jeff asked if there were

'any passengers?"
Yuba Bill indicated the meek stranger with a jerk of his thumb. "And his wife and darter In the coach. They're all right and tight, ez if they was in the Fifth Avenue Hotel. But I reckon he allows to fetch 'em up yer," added Bill, as if he strongly doubted the wisdom of the

The meek man, much meeker for the pres ence of Bill, here suggested that such indeed was his wish, and further prayed that Jeff would accompany him to the coach to assist in bringing them up. "It's rather wet and dark," said the man apologetically: "my daughter is not strong. Have you such a thing as a water-

Jeff had not; but would a bearskin do?

Jeff ran, tore down his extempore window aurtain, and returned with it. Yuba Bill, who proceeding, here disengaged himself from the bar with evident reluctance.
"You'll want another man," he said to Jeff,

onless ve can carry double. Ez he." indicating

the stranger, "ez no sort o' use, he'd better stay here and 'tend bar,' while you and me fetch the wimmen off. Specially ez I reckon we've got to do some tall wadin' by this time to reach 'em.' The meek man sat down helplessly in a chair indicated by Bill, who at once strode after Jeff. In another moment they were both fighting their way, step by step, against the storm, in that peculiar, drunken, spasmodic way so amusing to the spectator and so exasperating to the performer. It was no time for conversation, even interjectional profanity was dan-

gerously exhaustive.

The coach was scarcely a thousand yards away, but its bright lights were reflected in a sheet of dark, silent water that stretched between it and the two men. Wading and splashing they soon reached it, and a gully where the surplus water was poufing into the valley below. "Fower feet o' water round her, but can't get any higher. So ye see she's all right for a mouth o' sich weather.' Inwardly admiring the perspicacity of his companion. Jeff was about to open the coach door. when Bill interrupted:
"I'll pack the old woman, if you'll look arter

the darter and enny little traps."

A female face, anxious and elderly, here appeared at the window.
"Thet's my little game." said Bill, sotto voce.

"Is there any danger? where is my husband?" asked the woman, impatiently.
"Ez to the danger, ma'am—thar ain't any.

Yer ez safe here ez ye'd be in a Sacramento steamer; ez to vour husband, he allowed I was to come yer and fetch yor up to the hotel. That's his lookout!" With this cheering speech, Bill proceeded to make two or three ineffectual scoops into the dark interior, manifestly with the idea of scooping out the lady in question. In another instant he had turned her, lifted her gently but firmly in his turned her strangely soft dark eyes upon him? arms, and was turning away. But my child!-my daughter! she's asleep" | ingly in his hand, then he opened his trunk

expostulated the woman; but Bill was already swiftly splashing through the darkness. Jeff. eft to himself, hastily examined the coach; on the back seat a slight, small figure, enveloped In a shawl, lay motionless. Jeff threw the bearkin over it gently, lifted it on one arm, and gathering a few travelling bags and baskets with the other, prepared to follow his quickly disappearing leader. A few feet from the seach the water appeared to deepen, and the bearskin to draggle. Jeff drew the figure up

"Sis," he said, softly. No reply.

"Sis " shaking her gently.

There was a slight movement within the 'Couldn't ye climb up on my shoulder, honey? that's a good child!"

There were one or two spasmodic jerks of the bearskin, and, aided by Jeff, the bundle was presently seated on his shoulder. Are you all right now, Sis?"

Something like a laugh came from the bear skin. Then a childish voice said: "Thank you, I think I am !"

'Ain't you afraid you'll fall off?" Jeff hesitated. It was beginning to blow again.

You couldn't reach down and put your arm round my neck, could ye, honey?" I am afraid not!"-although there was

alight attempt to do so.

" No !" Well, then, take a good holt, a firm, strong helt o' my hair! Don't be afraid!"

A small hand timidly began to rummage in 'Take a firm holt; thar, just back o' my neck! That's right."

The little hand closed over half a dozen curls The little figure shook and giggled. 'Now, don't you see, honey, if I'm keerless with you, and don't keep you plumb level up

thar, you jist give me a pull and fetch me up all standing!

'Of course you do! That's because you're Jeff strode on. It was pleasant to feel the soft,

warm fingers in his hair, pleasant to hear the faint childish voice, pleasant to draw the feet of the enwrapped figure against his broad breast. Altogether, he was sorry when they reached the dry land and the lee of the "Half-way House," where a slight movement of the figure expressed a wish to dismount.

Not yet, Missy," said Jeff; "not yet! You'll get blown away, sure! And then what'll they say! No, honey! I'll take you right in to your papa, just as ye are!"

A few steps more and Jeff strode into the hall. made his way to the sitting room, walked to the sofa, and deposited his burden. The bearskin fell back, the shawl fell back, and Jeff-fell back too! For before him lay a small, slight, but beautiful and perfectly formed woman.

He had time to see that the meek man, no longer meek, but apparently a stern, uncompromising parent, was standing at the head of the sofa; that the elderly and nervous female was bovering at the foot, that his aunt, with every symptom of religious and moral disapproval of his conduct, sat rigidly in one of the rigid chairs—he had time to see all this before the quick, hot blood, flying to his face, sent the water into his eyes, and he could see nothing!

The cause of all this smiled-a dazzling smile

austere gloom of the room and its occupants. "You must thank this gentleman, papa," said she, languidly turning to her father, "for his kindness and his trouble. He has carried me here as gently and as carefully as if I were a child." Seeing symptoms of a return of Jeff's distress in his coloring face, she added softly, as it to herself, "It's a great thing to be stronga greater thing to be strong and gentle,"

The voice thrilled through Jeff. But into this dangerous human music twanged the accents of special spiritual revelation, and called him to himself again. "Be ye wise as sarpints, but barmless as duvs," said Jeff's aunt, generally, and let 'em be thankful ez doesn't aboos the stren'th the Lord gives 'em, but be allers ready to answer for it at the bar o' their Maker." Possibly some suggestion in her figure o speech reminded her of Jeff's forgotten duties so she added in the same breath and tone, especially when transient customers is walting for their licker, and Yuba Bill hammerin on the counter with his glass; and yer ye stand Jeff, never even takin' up that wet barskin-

enuff to give that young woman her deth."
Stammering out an incoherent apology, adfressed vaguely to the occupants of the room but looking toward the languid goddess on the sofa, Jeff seized the bearskin and backed out of the door. Then he flew to his room with it, and then returned to the barroom; but the impatient William of Yuba had characteristically helped himself and gone off to the stable. Then Jeff stole into the hall and halted before the closed door of the sitting room. A bold idea of going in again, as became the land-lord of the "Half-way House," with an inquiry if they wished anything further, had seized him, but the remembrance that he always had meekly allowed that duty to devolve upon his aunt, and that she would probably resent it with scriptural authority and bring him to shame again, stayed his timid knuckles at the door. In this hesitation he stumbled upon his aunt coming down the stairs with an armful of

Indian servant, staggering under a mattress.
"Is everything all right, Auntie?" Ye kin be thankful to the Lord, Jeff Brigge that this didn't happen last week when I was down on my back with rhoumatiz. But ye'r never grateful."

blankets and pillows, attended by their small

"The young lady—is she comfortable?" said Jeff, accepting his aunt's previous remark as

confirmatory.
" Ez well ez enny critter marked by the finger of the Lord with gallopin' consumption kin be, I reckon. And she, ez oughter be putting off airthly vanities, askin' for a lookin'-glass! And you! trapsin' through the hall with her on yer shoulder, and dancin' and jouncin' her up and down ez if it was a ball room!" A guilty recol-lection that he had skipped with her through the passage struck him with remorse as his aunt went on: "It's a mercy that betwirt you and the wet barskin she ain't got her deth!"

"Don't ye think, Aunty," stammered Jeff, "that—that—my bein' the landlord, yer know, it would be the square thing—just out o' respect, ye know—for me to drop in thar and ask 'em if thar's anythin' they wanted?"

His aunt stopped, and resignedly put down the pillows. "Sarah," she said meekly to the handmaiden, "ye kin leave go that mattress. Yer's Mr. Jefferson thinks we ain't good enough to make the beds for them two city women folks, and he allows he'll do it himself!"
"No. no. Aunty?" began the horrifled Jeff;

safety in flight.

bearskin. It certainly was wet. Perhaps he had been careless. Perhaps he had imperilled her life! His cheeks flushed as he threw it hastily in the corner. Something fell from it to the floor. Jeff picked it up and held it to the light. It was a small, a very small, lady's slipper. Holding it within the palm of his hand as if it had been some delicate flower which the pressure of a finger might crush, he strode to the door, but stopped. Should he give it to his aunt? Even if she overlooked this evident proof of his carelesaness, what would she think of the young lady's? Ought he-seductive thought!-go down stairs again, knock at the door, and give it to its fair owner, with the apology he was onging to make? Then he remembered that he had but a few moments before been dismissed the room very much as if he were the

original proprietor of the skin he had taken. Perhaps they were right; perhaps he was only a foolish chunsy animal! Yet she had thanked him—she had said in her sweet childlike voice.

"It is a great thing to be strong; a greater thing to be strong and gentle." He was strong; strong men had said so. He did not know if he For some moments he held the slipper hesitat-

it were some fragile, perishable object, laid it carefully therein. This done, he drew off his boots, and rolling himself in his blanket, lay down upon the bed. He did not open his novel-he did not follow up the exciting love episode of his favorite hero-so ungrateful is humanity to us poor romancers, in the first stages of their real passion. Ah, me! 'tis the jongleurs and troubadours they want then, not us! When Master Siender, sick for sweet Anne Page, would 'rather than forty shillings" he had his "book

and disposing various articles around it as

of songs and sonnets" there, what availed it that the Italian Boccacio had contemporaneously discoursed wisely and sweetly of love in prose. I doubt not that Master Jeff would have numbled some verse to himself had he known any; knowing none, he lay there and listened

Did she hear it; did it keep her awake? He had an uneasy suspicion that the shutter that was banging so outrageously was the shutter of her room. Filled with this miserable thought, he arose softly, stole down the staircase, and listened. The sound was repeated. It was truly the refractory shutter of No. 7-the best bedroom adjoining the sitting room. The next room, No. 8, was vacant. Jeff entered it softly, as softly opened the window, and leaning far out in the tempest, essayed to secure the nocturnal disturber. But in vain. Cord or rope he had none, nor could he procure either without alarming his aunt-an extremity not to be considered. Jeff was a man of clumsy but forceful expedients. He hung far out of the window, and, with one powerful hand, lifted the shutter off its hinges and dragged it softly into No. 8. Then as softly he crept up stairs to bed. The wind howled and tore round the house; the crazy water pipe below Jeff's window creaked; the chimneys whistled, but the shutter banged no more Jeff began to doze. "It's a great thing to be strong," the wind seemed to say as it charged upon the house, and then another voice seemed o reply." A greater thing to be strong and gen-

tle;" and hearing this he fell asleep.

It was not yet daylight when he awoke with an idea that brought him hurriedly to his feet. Quickly dressing himself, he began to count the money in his pocket. Apparently the total was not satisfactory, as he endeavored to augment it by loose coins fished from the pockets of his other garments, and from the corner of his washstand drawer. Then he cautiously crept down stairs, seized his gun, and stole out of the still sleeping house. The wind had gone down, the rain had ceased, a few stars shone steadily in the north, and the shapeless bulk of the coach, its lamps extinguished, loomed high and dry above the lessening water, in the twilight. With a swinging tread Jeff strode up the hill. and was soon upon the highway and stage road. A half hour's brisk walk brought him to the summit, and the first rosy flashes of morning light. This enabled him to knock over half a dozen early quail, lured by the proverb, who were seeking their breakfast in the chaparral. and gave him courage to continue on his mission, which his perplexed face and irresolute manner had for the last few moments shown to be an embarrassing one. At last the white fences and imposing outbuildings of the "Summit Hotel" rose before him, and he uttered a deep sigh. There, basking in the first rays of the morning sun, stood his successful rival! Jeff looked at the well-built, comfortable structure, be an embarrassing one. At last the white fences though a faint one-that momentarily lit up the | looked at the well-built, comfortable structure,

the commanding site and the air of screne it dependence that seemed to possess it, and no longer wondered that the great world passed

him by to linger and refresh itself there. He was relieved to find the landlord was no present in person, and so confided his business to the barkeeper. At first it appeared that that functionary declined interference, and, with many headshakings and audible misgivings. was inclined to await the coming of his princi-pal; but a nearer view of Jeff's perplexed face, and an examination of Jeff's gun, and the few coins spread before him. finally induced him to produce certain articles, which he packed in a basket and handed to Jeff, taking the gun and coins in exchange. Thus relieved, Jeff set his face homeward, and ran a race with the morning into the valley, reaching the "Half-way House" as the sun laid waste its bare, bleak outlines, and relentlessly pointed out its de-

fects one by one.
It was cruel to Jeff at that moment, but he hugged his basket close and slipped to the back door, and the kitchen, where his aunt was already at work.
"Ididn't know ye were up yet, Aunty." said

Jeff, submissively. "It isn't more than six o'clock.' "Thar's four more to feed at breakfast." said

his aunt, severely, "and yer's the top blown off the kitchen chimbly, and the fire only just got to go." Jeff saw that he was in time. The ordinary breakfast of the "Half-way House," not yet

prepared, consisted of codfish, ham, yellow-

ochre biscuit, made after a peculiar receipt of his aunt's, and potatoes.
"Igot a few fancy fixins up at the Summit this morning, Aunty," he began, apologeti-cally, "seein' we had sick folks, you know-you and the young lady-and thinkin' it might save you trouble. I've got 'em here," and he shyly

produced the basket.
"Hye kin afford it, Jeff," responded his aunt resignedly. " I'm thankful." The reply was so unexpectedly mild for Aunt Sally, that Jeff out his arms around her and

"If ye kin afford it, Jeff." responded his aunt resignedly, "I'm thankful."

The roply was so unexpectedly mild for Aunt Sally, that Jeff out his arms around her and kissad her hard cheek. "And I've got some quail. Aunty knowin' you liked 'em"

"I reckoned you was up to some such foolishness." said Aunt Sally, wiping her cheek with her apron. "when I missed yer gan from the hall." But the allusion was a dangerous one and Jeff slipped sway.

Ho breakfasted early with Yuba Bill that morning, the latter gentleman's facturnity being intensified at such moments through a long habit of confining himself strictly to eating in the limited time allowed his daily repasts, and it was not until they had taken the horses from the stable and were harnessing them to the coach that Jeff extracted from it. seempanion some facts about his guests. They were Mr. and Mrs. Mayfield, easterntourists, who had been to the Sandwich Islands for the benefit of their daugnter's health, and before returning to New York Intended, under the advice of their obspician to further try the effects of mountain air at the "Summit Hotel" on the invalid. They were apparently rich people, the coach had been engaged for them solely—even the mail and express had been sent on by a separate converance, so that they might be more lidependent. It is hardly necessary to say that this fact was by no means palafable to Bilt—debarring him not only the social contact and attentions of the "Express Agent," but the solection of a box-seated passenger who always "acted like a man."

"Ye kin kalkilate what kind of a pardner that ar yalier-livered Mayfield would make up on that box, partik iye a! heard before we started that he'd requested the kimpany's agent in Sacramento to select a driver ez din't cuss, smoke, or drink. He did, sir, by gum!

"Ye kin kalkilate what kind of a pardner that are yalier-livered Mayfield would make up on that box partik iye a! heard before was shorted and increased to the coach and labored in a Christian-like way with that mare to that ex

but failing to placate his injured relative, took

"Is be speaking to me?" said Bill, audibly to Jeff. "cause they call me 'Yuba Bill' yer abouts." "He is." said Jeff, hastily.

"Mabbee he's drunk," said Bill, audibly; "a drop or two afore broakfast sometimes upsets his kind."

"I was saying, Bill," said Mr. Mayfield, becoming utterly limp and weak again under Bill's cold gray eyes, 'that I've changed my mind, and shail stop here awhile. My daughter seems already benefited by the change. You can take my traps from the boot and leave them here.

Hill laid down his lime resignedly, coolly surveyed Mr. Mayfield muse, and the half-pleased, half-frights and then proceeded to remove the luminous, and the half-pleased, half-frights and then proceeded to remove the luminous firmsive incredulity. Then he climbed the to his box, Mr. Mayfield, completely demoralized under this treatment, as a last resort essayed patronage.

"You can say to the Sacramento agents, Bill, that I am entirely satisfied, and—"
"Ye needn't fear but I'll give ye a good character," interrupted Bill coolly, gathering up his lines. The whip snapped, the six horses dashed forward as one, the coach plunged down the road, and was gone.

With its disappearance Mr. Mayfield stiffened slightly again. "I have just told your aunt, Mr. Briggs," he said turning upon Jeff. 'that my daughter has expressed a desire to remain here a few days; she has slept well, seems to be invigorated by the sir, and, although we expected to go on to the 'Summit,' Mrs. Mayfield and myself are willing to accede to her wishes. Your house seems to be new and clean. Your table—judging from the breakfast this morning—is forgot what that breakfast had cost him—forgot all his morning's experience, and, I fear, when

forgot what that breakfast had cost him-forgot all his morning's experience, and, I fear, when he did remember it. was too full of a vague

Jeff, in the liter lush of delight at this news forgot what that breakfast had cost him—forgot all his morning's experience, and, I fear, when he did remember it, was too full of a vague, hopeful courage to appreciate it. Conscious of showing too much pleasure, he affected the necessity of an immediate interview with his aunt, in the kitchen. But his short cut round the house was arrested by a voice and figure. It was Miss Mayfield, wrapped in a shawl and seated in a chair, basking in the sunlight of one of the bleakest and barest angles of the house. Jeff stopped in a delicious tremor.

As we are dealing with facts, however, it would be well to look at the cause of this tremor with our own eyes and not Jeffs. To be plain, my dear madam, as she basked in that remorseless, matter-of-fact California sunshine, she looked her full age—twenty-five, if a day! There were wrinkles in the corners of her dark eyes, contracted and frowning in that strong, mereiless light; there was a nervous pallor in her complexion, but being one of those "fast colored" bruncites, whose dyes are a part of their temperament, no sickness nor wear could bleach it out. The red of her small mouth was darker than yours, I wot, and there were certain faint lines from the corners of her delicate nostrils indicating alternate repression and excitement under certain experiences, which are not found in the classic ideals. Now Jeff knew nothing of the classic ideal—did not know that a thousand years ago certain sensual idiots had, with brush and chisel, inflicted upon the world the personification of the strongest and most delicate, most controlling and most subtle passion that humanity is capable of, in the likeness of a thick-waisted, idealess, expression-less, perfectly contented female animal; and the thousands of idiots had since then insisted upon perpetuating this model for the benefit of a world that had gone on sighing for, pining for, fighting for, and occasionally blowing its brains out over types far removed from that idiotic standard. C

father says his daughter is in the coach; and Bill says, says he to me, 'I'll pack—I'll carry the old—I'll bring up Mrs. Mayfield, if you'll bring up the daughter;' and when we come to the coach I saw you asleep-like in the corner, and bein's mall, why, miss, you know how nat'rai it is. I—" Oh, Mr. Jeff ! Mr. Briggs!" said Miss May-

"Oil, Mr. Jeff. Mr. Friggs!" and Miss Maymoid, plantively," don't, please—don't spoil the
best compilment Ive had in many year." You
ind," she said audaciously, suddenly bringing
her black eyes to bear on him like a rifle, "you
lind," well; the was inaudible, but not inwhat Jeff thought was inaudible, but not inwell the state of the st

ing past inis centari to the wooded mountain
boyond.

Jeff, thoroughly crushed, was pacing meekly
away, when a childrid a voice stopped him.

"If you are going hear a carpenter's shop you
might get a new swatter for my window; it blew
away last night."

"It did, miss?"

"Yes," said the shrill voice of Aunt Sally
from the doorway. "In course it did! Ye
must be crazy, Jeff, for thar it stands in No. 8,
what ye must have put it after ye picked it up
outside."

outside."

Jeff, conscious that Miss Mayfield's cross were on his suffused face, stammered "that he would nd put spurs to the mare, eager It was not his only discomfiture; for the blacksmith, seeing Jeff's nervousness and anxitety, was suspicious of something wrong, as the world is apt to be, and appeased his conscience after the worldly fashion, by driving a hard bargain with the doubtful brother in affliction—the morality of a horse trade residing always with the seller. Whereby Master Jeff recoived only eighty dollars for horse and outlit—was with the seller. Whereby Master Jeff well with the seller of the

hanging from her shoulders, her hands clasped round her crossed knees, and one ditle feet out—an exasperating combination of Evangeline and little Bed Ridding Hood in everything, I fear, but credulousness and self-devotion. She looked up as he wniked toward her lash constat that the little witch had not already soon him half a mile away I and smiled sweetly as she looked at him. So sweetly, indeed, that poor Jeff felt like the hulking wolf of the old world fable, and healerstad. she looked at him. So sweetly, indeed, that poor Jeff felt like the hulking wolf of the old world fable, and hoslinted—as that wolf did not. The California famou have possibly depreciated.

"Come haral" she cried, in a small head volce, not unlike a bird's twitter.

Jeff lumbered on clumsily. His high boots had become suddenly very heavy.

"I'm so glad to see you. I've just tired poor mother out—I'm always tiring people out—and she's gone back to the house to write letters. Sit down Mr. Jeff, do, please!"

Jeff, feeling uncomfortably large in Miss Mayfield's presence, painfully scated himself on the edge of a very low stone, which had the effect of bringing his knees up on a level with his chin, and affected an case glaringly simulated.

"Or lie down, there, Mr. Jeff—it is so com-"Or lie down, there, Mr. Jeff-it is so com-

lated.
"Or lie down, there, Mr. Jeff-it is so comfortable."

Jeff, with a dreadful conviction that he was crashing down like a falling pine tree, managed at last to acquire a recumbent position at a respectful distance from the little figure.

There, isn't it nice?"
"Yes, Miss Mayfield."
"But, perhaps," anid Miss Mayfield, now that she had him down. "perhaps you too have got something to do. Dear me! I'm like that naughty boy in the story book, who went round to all the animais, in turn, asking them to play with him. He could only flad the butterfly who had nothing to do. I don't wonder he was disgusted. Thate butterflies."

Love clarifles the intellect! Jeff astonished at himself burst out. "Why look yer, Miss Mayfield, the batterfly on'y hez a day or two to—to-to live and—be happy!"

Mess Mayfield crossed her knees again, and instantly, after the subsime fashion of her sex, exattered his Intellects by a swift transition.

field, the batterfly on'y heza day or two to-toto live and—be barpty !"

Miss Mayfield crossed ther knees again, and instantly, after the authine firshion of her sex,
scattered his intellects by a swirt transition
from the abstract to the concrete. But, you're
not a butterfly, Mr. Jeff. You're always doing
something—you've been hunting."

No-o!' said Jeff. scarlet, as he thought of
his gun in pawn at the Summit.

But you do hunt; I know it,"

How?"

You shot those quail for me the morning
after I came. I heard you go out—early—very
early."

"Why! you allowed you slept so well that
night, Miss Mayfield."

Yes, but there's a kind of delicious halfsleep that sick people have sometimes, when
they know and are gratefully conscious that
other people are doing things for them, and it
makes them rest ail the sweeter."

There was a dead silence. Jeff, thrilling all
over, dared not say anything to dispel his delicious dream. Miss Mayfield, alarmed at his
readiness with the butterfly illustration, stopped
short. They both looked at the prospect, at the
distant "Summit Hote!"—a mere snow drift on
the mountain—at the clear sunlight on the barren plateau, at the bleak, uncompromising

"Hailway House," and—said nothing.

Tought to be very grateful," at last began
Miss Mayfield, in quite another voice, and a
suggestion that she was now approaching real
and profitable conversation, "that I'm so much
better. This mountain air has been like baim
to me. I feel I am growing stronger day by
day. I do not wonder that you are so healthy
and so strong as you are, Mr. Jeff."

Jeff, who really did not know before that he
was so healthy, apologetically admitted the
fact. At the same time, he was miserably conscious that Miss Mayfield's condition, despite
her ill health, was very superior to his own.

"A month ago," she continued, reflectively,
my mother would never have thought it possitele to leave me here alone. Perhaps she may
be getting worries now."

Miss Mayfield in ad calculated over much on
Jeff's recumbent position.

"A month ago," she continued, reflectively, "my mother would never have thought it possible to leave me here alone. Perhaps she may be setting werried now."

Miss Mayfield mad calculated over much on Jeff's recumbent position. To her surprise and slight mortification, he rose instantly to his feet, and said anxiously:

"Ef you think so, miss, p'raps I'm keeping you here."

"Not at all, Mr. Jeff. Your being here is a sufficient excuse for my staying," she replied, with the large dignity of a small body.

Jeff, mentally and physically crushed again, came down a little heavier than before, and reclined humbly at her feet. Second knock-down blow for Miss Mayfield.

"Come, Mr. Jeff," said the triumphant goddess, in her first voice, "tell me something about yourself. How do you live here? I mean what do you do? You ride, of course—and very well, too, I can tell you. But you know that. And of course that scarf and the silver spurs and the whole dashing equipage are not intended entirely for yourself. No! Some young woman is made happy by that exhibition of course. Well, then there's the riding down to see her, and perhaps the riding out with her, and—what else?"

"Miss Mayfield," said Jeff, suddenly rising above his elbow and his grammar, "thar isn't not yours woman! Thar isn't another soul except yourself that I've laid eyes on, or cared to see since I've been yer. Ef my aunt hez been telling ye that—she's—she she she lies."

Absolute, undiffuted truth, even of a complimentary nature, is confounding to most women. Miss Mayfield was no exception. She first lauched, as she felt she ought to and properly might with any other man than Jeff; then she got irightened, and said buff-end dire wher cloak over her shoulders. "I think I will return to the house," she said, quietly, "No, no! you misunderstand me. Your aunt has said nothing." And then she stopped with a pink spot on her cheekbones. First blood for Jeff!

Now this would never do: it was worse than the butterflies! She rose to her full height—four feet eleven and a

to come back for it, just because you lest obliged to go with me. Bring it with you on one arm, and I'll take the other, or else—I'll go alone. Don't be alarmed," she added, softly; "I'm stronger than I was the first night I came when you carried me and all my worldly goods besides."

She turned upon him her subtle magnetic eyes, and looked at him as she had the first night they met. Jeff turned away bewildered, but presently appeared again with the bag on his shoulder, and her wrap on his atm. As she slipped her little hand over his sleeve, he began applogetically and nervously—"When I said that about Aunt Sally, Miss. The hand immediately became limp, the grasp

The hand immediately became limp, the grasp conventional.

"I was med, Miss," Jeff blundered on, "and I den't see how you believed it—knowing everything ez you do."

"How—knowing everything as I do?" asked Miss Mayfield, coldly.

"Why, about the quail, and about the teag!"

"Oh," said Miss Mayfield.

Five minutes later. Yuba Bill nearly ditched his coach in his utter amazement at an apparently simple spectacle. A tall, good-looking young fellow, in a red shirt and high boots, carrying a bag on his back, and, beside him, hanging confidentially on his arm a small, slight, pretty girl in a red cloak. "Nothing mean about her, eh, Bill," said an admiring box passenger. "Young couple, I reckon, just out from the States."

hanging confidentially on his arm, a small, slight, pretty girl in a red cloak. Nothing mean about her, ch. Bill," said an admiring box passenger. "Young couple, I reckon, just out from the States."

"No," roared Bill.
"Oh, well, his sweetheart. I reckon?" suggested the box passenger.
"Nary time!" growled Bill. "Look yer! I know em both, and they knowe me. Did ye notise she never drops his arm when she sees the stage comin!, but kinder trapes along jist the same. Had they been courtin, she'd hey dropped his arm like pizen, and walked on tother side the road."

Nevertheless, for some occult reason, Bill was evidently out of humor; and for the next few miles exhorted the impenitent "Bing Grass" herse with considerable fervor.

Meanwhile this pair, outwardly the picture of pastoral conjugality, slowly descended the hill. In that brief time, fulling to get at any further facts regarding Jeff's life, or perhaps reading the story quite plainly, Miss Mayfiel had twittered prettily about herself. She painted her trouic life in the Sandwich Islands, her delicious "laziness," as she called it; "for you know," she added, "although I had the excuse of being an invalid, and of living in the laziest climate in the world, and of living in the laziest climate in the world, and of think I could ever be like your aunt. And there she is now, Mr. Jeff, making signs for you to hasten. No, don't mind me, but run on ahead; else I shall have her blaming me for demoralizing you too. Go, I insist upon it! I can walk the rest of the way alone. Will you go? You won't? Then I shall stop here and not stir another step forward until you do."

She stopped haif jestingly, half earnestly, in the middle of the road, and emphasized her determination with a nod of her head, an action that, however, shook her had first rakishly over one see, and then on the ground. At which Jeff laughed, picked it up, presented it to her, and then ran off to the house.

CHAPTER III.

CHAPTER III.

His aunt met him angrily on the porch.

"Thar ye are at last, and yer's a stranger waitin' to see you. He's been axin all sorts o' questions about the house and the business, and kinder smoopin' round permiskies. I don't like his looks, Jeff, but that's no reason why ye should be gailivantin' round in business hours."

A large, thick-set man, with a mechanical smile that was an ovortact of false pretence, was lounging in the barroom. Jeff dimiv remembered to have seen him at the last county election, distributing tickets at the polls. This gave Jeff a slight prejudice against him, but a greater presentiment of some varue evil in the air caused him to motion the stranger to an empty room in the angle of the house behind the barroom, which was too near the hair through which Miss Mayfield must presently pass.

It was an intelicitous act of precaution, for at

through which alies stayled must presently pass.

It was an infelicitous act of precaution, for at that very moment Miss Mayfield slowly passed beneath its open window, and seeing her chair in the sunny angle, dropped into it for rest and possibly meditation. Consequently she overheard every word of the following colloquy:

The Stranger's voice: "Well, now, seein' ez I've been waitin' for ye over an hour, off and on, and ez my bizness with ye is two words, it

strikes me yer puttin' on a little too much style in this yer interview, Mr. Jefferson Briggs."
Jeff's voice (a little husky with restraint):
"What is yer business?"
The Stranger's voice (lixily): "It's an straichment on this yer uroperty for principal, interest, and costs—one hundred and twelve dollars and seventy-five cents, at the suit of Cyrus Parker."

terest, and costs—one hundred and twelve doliars and seventy-five cents, at the suit of Cyrus Parker."

Jeff's voice (in quick surprise): "Parker? Why I saw him only yesterday, and he agreed to wait a speli longer."

The Stranger's voice: "Mebbse he did! Mebbse he heard a 'lerward suthin' about the goin's on up yar. Mebbse he heard suthin' o' property bein' converted into ready cash—sich property bein' converted into ready cash—sich property ez horses, guns, and sich! Mebbse he heard o' gay and festive doins—chicking every day, frosh eggs, butcher's meat, port wine, and sich! Mebbse he allowed that his chances o' gettin' his own honest grub outer his debt was iookan' nightly slim! Mebbse (louder) he thought he'd ask the man who bought yer horse, and the man vou pawned yer gun to, what was goin' on! Mebbse he thought he'd like to get a holt a suthin' himself, even if it was only some of that yar chickin and port wine!"

Jeff's voice (carnestly and hastily): "They're not for me. I have a family bearding here, with a sick daughter. You don't think—"The Stranger's voice (nizily): "I reckon! I seed you and her pre-ambulatin' down the hill, lockin' arms. A good deal o' style, Jeff-fancy! expensive! How does Aunt Sally take it?"

A slight shaking of the floor and window—a dead slience.

The Stranger's voice (very faintly): "For God's sake, let me ut!"

Jeff's voice (very distinctly): "Another word! raise your voice above a whisper, and by the living G—"
Silence.

The Stranger's voice (gasping): "I—"

Silence.

The Stranger's voice (gasping): "I—I—promise!"

Jeff's voice (low and desperate): "Get up out of that! Sit down that! Now hear me! I'm not resisting your process. If you had all h—ll as witnesses you daren't say that. I've shut up your foul jaw, and kept it from personalist health as witnesses you daren't say that. I've shut up your foul jaw, and kept it from personalist how listen! What! You will, will you?"

Everything quiet, a bird twittering on the window ledge, nothing more.

The Stranger's voice (very husky): "I cave! Gimme some whiskey."

Jeff's voice: "When we're through. Now listen! You can take possession of the house; you can stand behind the bar and take every cent that comes in: you can prevent anything going out; but ez long as Mr. Mayfield and his family stay here, by the living God—law or no law—'I'l be boss here, and they shall never know it!"

The Stranger's voice (weakly and submissively): "That sounds square, Anythin' not agin the law and in reason, Jeff''

Jeff's voice: "I mean to be square. Here is all the money! I have, ten dollars. Take it for any extra trouble you may have to satisfy me," A pause—the clinking of coin.

The Stranger's voice (deprecatingly): "Well! I reskon that could be about fair. Consider the trouble" (a weak laugh here! 'just aov. Taint every man ez hez your grip. Hel hel Ef ye hadn't took me so suddent like—hel hel—well!—how about that ar whiskey?"

Jeff's voice (cools): "I'll bring it."

Steps, silence, coughing, spitting, and throat clearing from the Stranger, so so suddent like—hel hel hel-well!—how about that ar whiskey?"

Jeff's voice (cools): "I'll bring it."

Steps, silence, coughing, spitting, and throat clearing from the Stranger, so coughing, spitting, and throat clearing from the Stranger. Steps again and the cilek of glass.

The Stranger's voice (hurriedly): "Thar's my hand on it. Ye can count on Jim Dodd." The Stranger's voice (gasping): "I-I-

of it's voice (eterniy): "If I find you go back on me—"
The Stranger's voice (hurriedly): "Thar's my hand on it. Ye can count on Jim Dodd."
Steps again. Silence. A bird lights on the window ledge, and peers into the room. All is at rest.

window ledge, and peers into the room. All is at rest.

Jeff and the deputy sheriff walked through the barroom and out on the porch. Miss May-fleid in an armchair looked up from her book.

I've written a letter to my father that I'd like to have mailed at the Forks this afternoon," she said, looking from Jeff to the stranger: "perhaps this gentlemen will oblige me by taking it if he's going that way."

"I'll take it, Miss," said Jeff, hurriedly,
"No," said Miss Mayfield, archly, "I've taken up too much of your time already."

"I m at your service, miss," said the stranger, considerably affected by the spectacle of this pretty girl, who certainly at that moment, in her bright eyes and slightly pink cheeks, bolied the suggestion of ill health.

"Thank you. Dear me!" she was rummaging in a reticule and in her pockets. "Oh, Mr. Jeff!"

"Yes, miss?"

Mr. Jeff!

"Yes, miss?"

"I'm so frightened!"

"How, miss?"

"I have—yes—I have left that letter on the stump in the woods, where I was sitting when you came. Would you—

Jeff darted into the house, seized his hat and stopped. He was thinking of the stranger.

"Could you be so kind?"

Jeff looked in her agitated face, cast a meaning glance at the stranger, and was off like a shot.

ing grance at the stranger, and was on like a shot.

The fire dropped out of Miss Mayfield's eyes and cheeks. She turned toward the stranger.

"Please step this way."

She always nated her own childish treble. But just at that moment she thought she had put force and dignity into it, and was correspondingly satisfied. The deputy sheriff was equally pleased, and came toward the upright little ligure with onen admiration.

"You name is Dodd—James Dodd."

"Yes, miss."

"You are the deputy sheriff of the county! Don't look round—there is no one here!"

"You are the deputy sheriff of the county! Don't look round—there is no one here!"
"Well, miss—if you say so—yes!"
"My father Mr. Mayfield—understood so. I tegret he is not here. I regret still more I could not have seen you before you saw Mr. Briggs, as he wished me to."

"Yes, miss."
"My father is a friend of Mr. Briggs, and knows something of his affairs. There was a debt to a Mr. Parker" (here Miss Mayfield apparently consulted an entry in her tablets) "of one hundred and twelve dollars and seventy-five cents—am I right?" The deputy, with great respect: "That is the

The deputy, with great respect: "That is the figgers." Which he wished to pay without the knowledge of Mr. Briggs, who would not have consented to it."

The official opened his eyes. "Yes, miss."

"Well, as Mr. Mayfield is not here, I am here to pay it for him. You can take a check on Wells, Fargo & Co., I suppose?"

"Certainly, miss."

She took the check book and pen and ink from her reticule, and filled up a check. She handed it to him and the pen and ink. "You are to give me a receipt." are to give me a receipt."

The deputy looked at the matter-of-fact little figure, and signed and nanded over the receipted bill.

My father said Mr. Briggs was not to know

this."
Certainly not, miss,"
It was Mr. Briggs's intention to let the judg-"It was Mr. Briggs's intention to let the judgment take its course, and give up the house. You are a man of business, Mr. Dodd, and know that this is ridetulous!"

"The deputy laughed. "In course, miss."

"And whatever Mr. Briggs may have proposed to you to do, when you go back to the Forks, you are to write him a letter, and say that you will simply hold the judgment without levy."

levy,"
"All right, miss," said the deputy, not illpleased to hold himself in this superior attitude
to Jeff.
"And —" "And —"
"Yes, miss?"
She looked steadily at him. "Mr. Briggs told my father that he would pay you ten dollars for the privilege of staying here."
"Yes, miss."
"And of course that's not necessary now."
"No-o, miss."
A very small white hand—a mere child's hand—was here extended, palm uppermost.

No-o, miss.

A very small white hand—a mere child's hand—was here extended, palm uppermost.

The official, demoralized completely, looked at it a moment, then went into his pockets and counted out into the palm the coins given by Jeff; they completely filled the tiny receptacle.

Miss Mayfield counted the money gravely, and placed it in her porfe-monade with a snap.

Certain qualities affect certain natures. This practical business act of the diminuitive beauty before him—albeit he was just ten dollars out of pocket by it—struck the official into helpless admiration. He hesitated.

"That's all," said Miss Mayfield, coolly; "you need not wait. The letter was only an excuse to get Mr. Briggs out of the way."

"I understand ye, miss." He hesitated still.

"Do you reckon to stop in these parts long?"

"I don't know,"

"Cause ye ought to come down some day to

Do you recken to stop in these parts long?"

"I don't know."

"Cause ye ought to come down some day to the Forks."

"Yes."

"Good morning, miss."

"Good morning."

Yet at the corner of the house the rascal turned and looked bask at the little flaure in the sunlight. He had just been physically overcome by a younger man—he had lost ten dellars—he had a wife and three children. He forget all this. He had been captivated by Miss Mayfield!

That practical heroine sat there five minutes. At the end of that time Jeff came bounding down the hill, his curls damp with perspiration; his fresh, henest face the picture of woe, he wee, for the letter could not be found!

"Never mind, Mr. Jeff. I wrote another and gave it to him."

Two tears were standing on her cheeks. Jeff turned white.

"theel God miss!"

Two tears were standing on her cheeks. Jeff turned white.

"Good God, miss!"

"It's nothing. You were right. Mr. Jeff! I ought not to have walked down here alone. I'm very, very fired, and—so—so miserable."

What woman could withstand the anguish of that honest, boyish face? I fear Miss Mayfield could. She looked at him over her handkerchief, and said. Perhaps you had something to say to your friend, and I'vo sent him off.

Nothing. Said Jeff, hurriedly; and she saw that all his other troubles had vanished at the sight of her weakness. She rose tremblingly from her seat. "I think I will go in now, but I think—I think—I must ask you to—to—carry me!"

think—I think—I must ask you to—to—carry me!"

Oh, lame and impotent conclusion!

The next moment Jeff pale, strong, passionate, but tender as a mother, lifted her in his arms and brought her into the sitting room. A simultaneous enaulation broke from Aunt Sally and Mrs. Maylid—the possible comment of posterity on the whole episode.

"Well, Jeff, I reckoned you'd be up to suthin like that!" like that !"
"Well, Jessie! I knew you couldn't be trusted."
Mr. James Dodd did not return from the

Forks that afternoon, to Jeff's vague unenst ness. Towards evening a messenger brough a note from him, written on the back of a printed legal form, to this effect:

"Dear Sin: Seeing as you Intend to not or the Square in regard to that little Mater I have arranged Things so that I am got to stop with you but I'll drop in onet in a wile to keep up show for a Drink. respy yours J. Dopp.

the Square in regard to that little Matter I have arranged Things so that I and got to stop with a supposed to the pure show for a Drink. respy yours J. Donn."

In this latter suggestion our legal corberus exhibited all three of his heads at once. One could keep faith with Miss Mayfield, one could see her "onet in a wile," and one could drink at Jeff's expense. Innocent Jeff saw only generosity and kindness in the man he had half choked, and a sense of remorse and shalf choked with the sense. "He might have been ugly," said Jeff. He did not know now, in this selfsh world, there is very little room for gatuitous, active ugliness. Miss Mayfeld did not leave her room that afternom. The wind was getting up, and it was growing dark when Jeff, idly sitting on his porch, hoping for her appearance, was quit astounded at the apparition of Yuka Bill as a pedestrian, dusty and thirsty, making for his usual refreehment. Jeff broughtout the bottle, but could not refrain from mixing his verbal astonishment with the conventional cocktail, Bill, partaking of his liquor and becoming once more a speaking animal, slowly drew off his heavy, bagry driving gloves. No one had ever seen Bill without them—he was currently bellayed to sleen in them—and when he laid them on the counter they still retained the grip of his hand, which gave them an entertaining likeness to try plethoric and over-fed spiders.

"Efficiently Jeff sharply," I don't know et they still retained the grip of his hand, which gave them an entertaining likeness to try plethoric and over-fed spiders.

"Efficiently Jeff sharply," I don't know the hand only take in fasif who lammerios.

"Efficiently Jeff sharply," I don't know the proving and espendently like the hand of the proving land o

Bill raised his glass, softly swirled its contents round and round, tasted it, and set it down.

"The kepple o' words I had to say to ye was this: Git up and git!"

Something like this had bassed through Jeff's mind the day before the Mayfields came. Something like it had haunted him once or twice since. He turned quickly upon the speaker.

"Ez how! you sez," said Bill, catching at the look, "I drives up yer some night, and you sez fo me. Bill, her you got two seats over to the Divide for me and Aunty—out on a pasear. And I sez, 'I happen to hev one inside and one on the box with me.' And you hands out yer traps and any vallybles ye don't want ter leave, and you puts your aunt inside, and gets up on the box with me. And you sez to me, ez man to man, Bill, sez you, 'might you hev a kepple o' hundred dollars about ye that ye could lend a man ez was leaving the county dead broke?' And I sez, 'I've got it, and I know of an op'nin' for such a man in the next county." And you steps into that lop'nin', and your creditors—'spesh'ly Parker—slips into this, and in a week they offers to settle with yo ten cents on the dollar."

Jeff started, flushed, trembled, recovered himself, and after a moment said, doggedly, "I can't do it, Bill; I couldn't."

"In course," said Bill, putting his hands slowly into his pockets, and stretching his less out, "In course ye can't, because of a woman!"

Jeff turned upon him like a hunted bear. Both men rose, but Bill already had his hand on Jeff's shoulder.

"I reckoned a minute ago there was a sick gal in the house! Who's going to make a row how! Who's going to stamp and tear round eh?"

Jeff sank back on his chair.

"I said thar was a woman," continued

oh?"

Jeff sank back on his chair.
"I said thar was a woman," continued Bill; "thar allus is one! Let a man be hell-bent or heaven-bent somewhere in his tracks is a woman's feet. I don't say anythin' agin this gal, ez a gal. The best on 'em, Jeff, is only guide posts to pint a fellow on his right road, and only a fool or a drunken man holds on to 'em or leans agin 'em. Altowin' this gall is all you think she is: how far is your guide post goin' with ye, eh? Is she goin' to leave her father and mother for ye? Is she goin' to leave her father and mother for ye? is your guide post goin' with ye, ch? Is she goin' to leave her father and mother for ye? Is she goin' to leave her father and mother for ye? Is she goin' to give up herself and her easy ways and her sicknesses for ye? Is she willin' to take ye for a perpetocal landlord the rest of her life? And If she is, Jeff. are ye the man to let her? Are ye willin' to run on her errands, to fetch her dinners czye do? Thar ez men ez does it, not yer in Californy, but over in the States thar's fellows is willin' to take that situation. I've heard," continued Bill, in a low, mysterious voice; as of one describing the habits of the Anthropophagi, "I've heard o' lellows ez call themselves men, sellin' of themselves to rich women in that way, I've heard o' rich gais buyin' of men for their shape: sometimes—but thet's in furrin' kintries—for their pedigree! I've licard o' fellows bein' in that business, and callin' themselves men instead o' hosses! ya lint that kind o' man, Jeff. Taint in yer blood. Yer father was a fool about women, and in course, they ruined him ez they allus do the best men. It's on'y the fools and sneaks ez nowman aver makes anythin' out of. Wien ye hear of a man a woman hez made, ye hears of n incompoop! And when they does produce 'em in the way o' nater they aint responsible for 'em, and sez they're the image o' their tathers! Ye aint a man ez is goin' to trust yer father so and bef, darkly, "No." said Jeff, darkly,"

fathers! Ye aint a man ez is goin' to trust yer fate to a woman!"

"No," said Jeff, darkly,

"I reckoned not," said Bill, putting his handa in his pockets again. "Ye might if ye was one o' them kind o' fellows as kem up from 'Frised with her to Sacramento. One o' them kind o' fellows ez could sling poetry and French and Latin to her—one of her kind—but ye aint! No, sir!" Unwise William of Yuba! In any other breast but Jeff's, that random shot would have awakened the irregular auxiliary of love—jealousy! But Jeff being at once proud and humble had neither vanity nor conceit—without will jealousy is impossible. Yet he wince la little for he had feeling, and then said, earn-cally. Do you think that opening you spoke of would hold for a day or two longer?"

"I recken."
"Well, then, I think I can settle up mattern here, my own way, and go with you, Bliff.

He had risen, and yet hestiating yet I dehand on the back of his chair. "Bill?"
"Jeff?"
"I want to ask you a question; spenk up and any mind me but set the start. don't mind me, but say the truth.

Our crafty Ulysses, believing that he was about to be entrapped, enseanced hims of me pockets, cocked one eye, and said, the manufacture of the cocked one eye, and said, the manufacture of the cocked one eye, and said, the manufacture of the cocked one eye, and said, the manufacture of the cocked one eye, and said, the manufacture of the cocked one eye, and said, the cocked one eye, and t

Jeff."
Was my father very bad?"
Bill took his hands from his pockets. "That isn't a man ez crawls above his grave! "E worthy to lie in the same ground with him."
"Thank you, Bill. Good night: I'm going to turn in!" turn in!"
Look yar, boy! G-d d-d it all, Jeff: went "Look yar, boy! G-d d-d it all, Jeff: wand do ye mean?"

There were two tears—twin sisters of these it his sweetheart's eyes that afterneon we standing in Jeff's!

Bull caught both his hands in his own. Het they been of the Latin race they would have right honestly taken each other in their aires and perhaps kissed! Being Angle Sawing and perhaps kissed! Being Angle Sawing they gripped can other's hands hard and reason above stated, swore!

When Jeff ascended to his poon that night is went liredly to his trunk and those out west and the simper. Alack during the dar A. A. Saliy and "put things to rights of the second still religiously kept as evide ventional character. He colthe medal and earring re-replaced thom in his true emptied the rest of the slips